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New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Qatar and Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jamal Benomar, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Benomar, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Sana'a.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: We have all been following recent developments in Yemen with the deepest concern. As the Security Council knows, I have just returned from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Preventing civil war in Yemen was the main political subject of my discussions with the leaders of the two countries.

I met with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud; the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum; Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General Abdul Latif Al Zayani, and many other leaders. They all expressed to me their serious concern that the situation in Yemen may get significantly worse unless we take more determined and concerted action. In particular they called for a strong and unmistakable signal to be sent to all parties that further acts aimed at undermining the transition would not be allowed to stand. I briefed them on the latest efforts by my Special Adviser on Yemen, Mr. Jamal Benomar. We agreed to work together even more closely going forward. I take this opportunity to highly commend Special Adviser Benomar for his leadership, hard work and commitment to facilitating the political negotiation under very dangerous circumstances.

Let me be clear: Yemen is collapsing before our eyes. We cannot stand by and watch. The country is facing multiple challenges. A dangerous political crisis continues in Sana'a. President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi, Prime Minister Khaled Bahah and Government ministers and other State officials must be granted the freedom of movement.

I am concerned by reports of excessive use of force to disperse peaceful demonstrators and of the use of arbitrary arrest and detention of civil society activists and journalists. I call for the protection of human rights, especially the rights to peaceful assembly and to the freedom of expression.

There have been more widespread and lethal attacks by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, with increasing hostilities between that groups and the Houthis in various provinces south of Sana'a, such as Damar and Al Baydah.

There are increasing secessionist tendencies in the south, and an acute humanitarian crisis. An astounding 61 per cent of the population — almost 16 million people — now need humanitarian assistance in Yemen. These developments threaten regional and international peace and security.

Given these troubling circumstances, we all have a solemn obligation to live up to our commitments under the Charter of the United Nations. We must do everything possible to help Yemen step back from the brink and get the political process back on track.

Yemen's transition has an agreed road map. All parties must abide by the common framework as set forth in the Implementation Mechanism of the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement. I expect them to refrain from any further provocations and to implement these agreements in full and without any further delays. To that end, my Special Adviser is facilitating negotiations with all sides on a consensual and peaceful way forward, under very difficult operational circumstances. All Yemeni parties must engage in the negotiations and cooperate in good faith.

I also call on the members of the Security Council to provide their continued unified support to the facilitation efforts of my Special Adviser. I also urge all

members to work closely with the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and other international partners to take confidence-building steps with the Yemeni sides to de-escalate tensions and pave the way for a peaceful way forward through political negotiations.

First and foremost, our focus must be on helping the Yemeni people to re-establish legitimate Government authority as soon as possible. At this time of crisis, I also call on Member States to increase their funding for the 2015 humanitarian response plan. Such support will be more urgently needed than ever before. This will be essential for preventing an escalation of the conflict and creating the basis for reverting to a peaceful political transition, which I firmly believe is the only way forward.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Benomar.

Mr. Benomar (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council has made every effort to support a peaceful, negotiated transition in Yemen. Over the past three years, I have repeatedly warned the Security Council about the dangers facing the transition process. Today, I deeply regret to inform the Council that the transition, which was widely heralded as a model, is now in disarray.

Over the past few weeks, Yemen has witnessed dramatic events. I have already briefed the Council twice in the past three weeks. I will therefore not repeat what I have already said, but will instead provide a factual account of events since my last briefing on 26 January.

I have continued exercising the good offices of the Secretary-General by convening negotiations on a daily basis involving 12 political parties, including Ansarallah, with a view to finding a consensual solution to the current political impasse. As mediators, we must maintain both our unique access to all sides and our principled position as framed by the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Today we are navigating multiple minefields. There have been ups and downs. Nevertheless, reasonable progress has been made, with all sides cognizant of the need to swiftly find a solution to restore public confidence.

In parallel to the negotiations under way, Ansarallah organized a large three-day gathering in Sana'a that concluded on 1 February. The gathering ended with an ultimatum to conclude the United Nations-facilitated negotiations within three days or else revolutionary committees would take action. The 4 February deadline passed without incident, and the negotiations moved ahead.

The United Nations-facilitated negotiations were adjourned in essence late on the evening of 5 February, with broad understanding among the parties on the general contours of an agreement. The parties decided to utilize the next day, 6 February, to resolve outstanding issues through bilateral consultations and to enable the United Nations to prepare a compromise text. The plan was then to reconvene on 7 February with the aim reaching a conclusion on an agreement.

However, on 6 February, in a surprising move, Ansarallah took unilateral action. They organized a gathering of their supporters at the Republican Palace and made a so-called "constitutional declaration". That declaration pronounced that Parliament would be dissolved, a five-member presidential council would be formed and that a supreme revolutionary committee would run the country temporarily.

The unilateral declaration has created strong backlash domestically and internationally. Major political parties have rejected it. The prevailing political uncertainty and heightened security risks have prompted key diplomatic missions to close and to withdraw temporarily from Yemen.

I have made it crystal clear that I deeply regret the unilateral action taken by Ansarallah, in particular when good progress had been made in the negotiations. As a representative of the Secretary-General, I have also made it clear to all parties, including Ansarallah, that the current political impasse can only be solved through peaceful dialogue and negotiations, based on the Implementation Mechanism of the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, National Dialogue Conference outcomes and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement.

I consulted with the political parties. I also had direct contact with Mr. Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, who assured me that he welcomed a consensus-based negotiated solution through United Nations facilitation. I am pleased that all agreed to resume the negotiations. Since the beginning of this week, we have been meeting on a daily basis, and progress has been made. We are still in the middle of delicate negotiations. Under discussion are complex issues regarding governing

arrangements during the transition period, including both executive and legislative authorities. The parties are considering power-sharing measures in a new Government of national unity and mechanisms and arrangements for enabling State security institutions to re-assume their responsibility. In addition, the parties are debating the means of preventing an outbreak of hostilities in Ma'rib, and undertakings to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights, such as the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, among others.

The situation in the oil-rich province of Ma'rib is very tense. Many Yemenis fear that confrontation between the Houthis and tribesmen could break out at any time. In the south, the situation is volatile. Southerners, who have suffered from many years of discrimination and marginalization, have become more assertive, with many demanding separation.

The current instability is creating conditions conducive to the re-emergence of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. Even more concerning is the prospect that Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula might establish a foothold in parts of Abyan, Shabwah, Hadramawt and Ma'rib. Today, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula has seized control of the 19th Infantry Brigade camp, which houses a large arsenal of ammunition and heavy weapons, in Bayhan and Shabwah.

The political uncertainty has created serious pressure on the local currency, the riyal. If no political settlement is secured in the coming days, a real possibility exists that the riyal may collapse. Serious concerns exist that the Government may be unable to pay salaries in the next two to three months. That, in turn, could prompt either a default on payments or an increase in money supply — that is, money printing that would cause severe devaluation and hyperinflation. Should that happen, the current poverty rate of 54 per cent would increase further, and private sector activities would be severely affected. Indeed, many donors already have halted development aid, and others are considering such action. That, in turn, would cause most capital expenditures to cease and basic service delivery to be interrupted, and tens of thousands could lose their jobs. That could further impact the security situation, with those unemployed joining armed groups for monetary and financial reasons, and contribute to a worsening of Yemen's humanitarian needs.

An estimated 15.9 million people — or 61 per cent of the population — need humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian response plan for 2015 is being finalized this week and will request some $748 million dollars to meet the needs of 8.2 million people. Of that requirement, $285 million is for urgent life-saving and protection assistance to the most vulnerable Yemeni people. Humanitarian partners are concerned about a possible expansion of conflict and the impact that would have on the civilian population. The increased political instability and risk of conflict could also complicate humanitarian efforts to develop durable solutions and sustainable livelihoods and to facilitate Yemen's progress towards recovery.

The transition has encountered serious obstacles in the past, yet time and again Yemenis have managed to forge ahead. Today, Yemen is at a crossroads: either the country will descend into civil war and disintegrate, or it will find a way to put the transition back on track. That largely depends on the political will of Yemeni leaders. They all bear responsibility for the current status of affairs and for finding a way to pull the country back from the brink.

The political, humanitarian and security environments pose serious challenges for United Nations operations. Nevertheless, the United Nations will not leave Yemen. The United Nations reaffirms its commitment to Yemen as it seeks to complete its political transition. In that regard, we have been consulting and coordinating closely with the Gulf Cooperation Council and other international partners.

Yesterday marked the fourth anniversary of the start of the peaceful demonstrations demanding change. It was the courage of the young demonstrators that opened the way for Yemenis to start a path to democratic transformation. Despite all the setbacks, failures and obstacles, that dream is still alive. Yemenis can still achieve it. The Security Council and the international community have a responsibility to support them in these difficult times.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Benomar for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Four years ago, on 11 February 2011, demonstrations took place in all Yemen's provinces. The demonstrations grew, demanding a change and the creation of a legitimate modern secular State founded on the basis of the rule of law, respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights. Since then, my country has experienced a

great deal of turbulence and a great many crises, which could have plunged the country into anarchy were it not for the grace of God, the support of our countrymen and the limitless support offered to us by friendly countries.

The United Nations was present from the very outset, through the good offices deployed by the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser, Mr. Jamal Benomar. He was able to organize very complex negotiations with all political components and factions that led to the signing, on 23 November 2011 in the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and Implementation Mechanism.

As the Council knows, the Initiative enabled Yemen to avoid plunging into chaos. All components of society have committed themselves to working through a period of transition that should enable us to recreate a secular, federal Yemeni State. The inclusive National Dialogue Conference, one of the main components of the GCC Initiative, enabled us to unite all political, cultural and social components around one negotiating table. The 10-month dialogue resulted in the well-known outcome containing the recommendations of the National Dialogue Conference, which represent all the desired objectives the Yemeni people. After the National Dialogue Conference ended, varying interpretations of those elements emerged, giving rise to differences among the various political components, although the latter were able, on 21 September 2014, to forge the Peace and National Partnership Agreement.

But the situation has deteriorated. His Excellency President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi was forced to resign, which led the various political components to engage in consultations under the auspices of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General to reach a consensus solution that would be acceptable to all parties. On 6 February, developments in the situation encouraged all parties to act responsibly by granting priority to the national interests, and to agree that consultations would resume on 9 February. That was certainly necessary as dialogue is the only possible way for Yemen to extricate itself from the potential crisis.

We certainly appreciate the very constructive role played by the Secretary-General through his Special Adviser, Mr. Jamal Benomar, working alongside all political components to achieve a consensus solution to ensure that the country does not plunge into the abyss. God preserve us from that. Yemen should not be turned into a hotbed of tension, threatening the region and the world. The situation could lead to civil war, which would not benefit Yemen, the region or the world. Consultations among Security Council members should rapidly lead to measures that would enable us to move forward towards achieving national consensus and advancing the transition period.

I am compelled to refer to the very serious humanitarian situation being endured by Yemenis. In addition to hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Horn of Africa and regions affected by conflict within the country, millions of Yemenis live below the poverty line. Statistics show that nearly 60 per cent live in poverty, with record levels of unemployment, pushing Yemen to the very brink of humanitarian catastrophe. We invite the international community to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance for Yemen in 2015. Yemen is commited to providing all necessary protection to diplomatic and consular missions. We cherish the hope that the friendly countries that have closed their embassies in Sana'a will resume their presence there as rapidly as possible.

In conclusion, I call upon the Security Council, all our brotherly States of the GCC, all States that have sponsored the Initiative, and all friends and brothers of our country to continue to back the political process, in keeping with the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, the Peace and Partnership Agreement, and the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference to guarantee peace, security and stability, which will contribute to the stability of the region and the world as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait — I should like first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on China's accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to thank you for convening this meeting in order to respond to the dangerous developments in Yemen. I also thank Mr. Jamal Benomar, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and all his efforts to achieve a political transition and strengthened stability in Yemen.

The events that have unfolded in recent weeks are dangerous and unprecedented because the coup against the legitimate Government in Yemen undermines the

political and peaceful transition. It goes against the highest interests of the people in Yemen at a time when the country is facing economic and development problems. Indeed, the current unacceptable escalation is the result of the activities of the Houthis and their sponsors, who have perpetrated a coup, occupied legitimate Government and other institutions by force, and kidnapped and placed elected officials — including President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour and Prime Minister Khaled Mahfoudh Abdullah Bahah — under house arrest. This is unacceptable. They are using force and flagrantly violating human rights, international law and humanitarian law. They have terrorized the people, committed arbitrary executions, threatened young people, recruited followers and threatened the livelihood, security and health of the people of Yemen. Indeed, the activities undertaken by the Houthis and their sponsors are a gross and egregious violation of resolution 2140 (2014) and of international law.

In response to those events, on 21 January the GCC convened an extraordinary ministerial summit in Saudi Arabia. The meeting reaffirmed the fact that the security of Yemen is intrinsic to the security of all countries of the GCC. It pledged its full support for the Yemeni people and condemned all terrorist activities. The GCC also declared its rejection of the latest move of the Houthis in issuing what they called a constitutional declaration. We believe that the declaration constitutes a violation of the GCC Implementation Mechanism, which is the outcome of the Gulf Initiative, which in turn was the result of the National Dialogue Conference in which all parties took part. The Mechanism is also supported by the Security Council. Therefore, we believe that the recent move should be condemned and that the Council should declare it illegal. We believe that we should bring pressure to bear on the Houthis to stop using force and withdraw from all governmental institutions under their control. They should be asked to normalize the security situation in Sana'a, the capital; put an end to their armed activities; and return the weapons they have looted from security and military institutions.

I believe that if the Security Council does not react quickly enough or if it procrastinates, it will send a reassuring message to the Houthis and their supporters and encourage them to continue in their activities, which will threaten international peace and security and the security and political stability in Yemen. We are confident that the Council will not adopt a passive position towards these activities, because this is a coup using force against an elected Government and Parliament. We believe that the current state of affairs will encourage Al-Qaida to carry out even more activities in the region and will have a negative and nefarious impact on the region and the world at large.

That is why we stand ready to give all possible assistance to our brothers in Yemen to facilitate the achievement of a political solution and implement the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference. We also hope that general elections will be organized in Yemen in the near future. In order to achieve these goals, the GCC shall support the efforts of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Yemen to promote an amicable agreement and to facilitate and conclude the political transition in Yemen.

Finally, we call on the Security Council to promptly react and address this situation. The GCC shall continue coordinating our efforts with the Security Council in order to ensure the implementation of resolution 2140 (2014) on Yemen to protect peace and stability in Yemen and ensure its territorial integrity and independence. In order to save Yemen from catastrophe, we would like to state once again that Yemen's territorial integrity and stability are part and parcel of our own regional security. We believe that we must make every effort to protect Yemen's vital interests.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.